

THREE BOOKS ANYONE *DATING* OR *GETTING MARRIED* SHOULD READ

Many single people are happy being single, and although many like dating, they have no intention of getting married. Still, dating sites filled with people looking for Mr. or Ms. Right remains plentiful. Bars are full of people looking to hook up with someone. Even church “singles groups” are filled with hopeful souls who may be looking for a friendship or a relationship. The one thing that is certain seems to be that the pursuit of finding a great relationship can be a little scary at times. That is why I would like to offer *three books I would consider essential reading* for anyone looking to get in the right relationship and not be left with hurts, regrets, and bad memories. There are many other great books on the market, but these seem to help people open their eyes to certain relationship realities that could be potentially hurtful and give good guidance on avoiding them. Of course, there are no guarantees in life, but it doesn't hurt to know how to avoid the pitfalls of finding the right relationship.

First, it's an old standard, but a good one, it's called: *Boundaries: When to Say Yes, How to Say No to Take Control of Your Life*, by Cloud and Townsend. This is the first in a series.

“Boundaries explore the reasons for problems in one's life, such as anxiety, depression and dissatisfaction. The reason for such feelings, according to the authors, is a lack of boundaries. Boundaries allow a person to say no with a clear conscious. A person with proper boundaries, according to this book, possesses a clear view of his or her own responsibilities and desires.”

They have also written, *Boundaries in Dating*, if you want something more specific.

The second is by the same authors Cloud and Townsend, called, *Safe People: How to Find Relationships That Are Good for You and Avoid Those That Aren't*.

Too many of us have invested ourselves into relationships that left us deeply wounded. We've been abandoned or taken advantage of, and left with little to show for what we've given. We've lost our sense of security and personal value in the process. And what's worse, we tend to either repeat the same mistakes of judgment over and over . . . Or else lock the doors of our hearts entirely and throw away the key. Why do we choose the wrong people to get involved with? Is it possible to change? And if so, where does one begin? Drs. Henry Cloud and John Townsend offer solid guidance for making safe choices in relationships, from friendships to romance. They help identify the nurturing people we all need in our lives, as well as ones we need to learn to avoid. *Safe People* will help you to recognize 20 traits of relationally untrustworthy people. Discover what makes some people relationally safe, and how to avoid unhealthy entanglements. You'll learn about things within yourself that jeopardize your relational security. And you'll find out what to do and what not to do to develop a balanced, healthy approach to relationships.

The last of the three is by Dr. Albert Bernstein, and is called, *Emotional Vampires: Dealing with People who Drain you Dry (revised 2nd edition)*

Emotional Vampires will help you cope effectively with the people in your life that confound you, confuse you, and seem to sap every ounce of your energy. Bestselling author Dr. Al Bernstein shows you how to recognize each vampire type--antisocial, histrionic, narcissists, obsessive-compulsives, paranoids--and deal with them

effectively. He uses many examples from the latest news headlines, which will help you distinguish between the types and deepen your understanding of each one.

Dr. Al Bernstein has added his advice for dealing with those emotional vampires who come in the shape of spouses and lovers, relatives, and children. Dr. Bernstein shows you how to deal with each vampire type and what you need to do to keep from getting drained.

Don't mistake my cautionary approach as me being cynical about people. I believe most people want to do right and treat others right. I just know some are dysfunctional and do not know how to have a good relationship. Others face situations where neither person is bad; they just mix like oil and water and do not know how to change in order to blend properly. Still, some are just so frightened of getting the wrong person they never let anyone into their lives. Dating or looking at an upcoming marriage of which one has doubts can be unnerving. Don't be plagued by fear and trepidation, educate yourself about yourself and others and you can find the right relationship for you!

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